UFO, UFOlogy reseach

"Klass74" UFOs Explained
Philip J. Klass
1974, Random House (1976 Vintage); (438p.)
UFO

A classic debunking work on UFO's, selecting a number of well-known and intriguing cases, particularly
some most touted by ET or mystery proponents. Klass's reconstructions can be complicated,
but are convincing. Not all would agree with his extrapolation to imply that all UFO cases, even if not explained similarly, must have prosaic explanations, but Klass's argument is not a trivial dismissal.
Cases discussed include the Socorro "Landing," the RB-47 case, the Pascagoula abductions and the Army helicopter incident of 1973, and many more.

"Klass83" UFO's: The Public Deceived
Philip J. Klass
1983, Prometheus Books; 310p.
UFO
Another Klass volume of prosaic explanations of prime UFO cases,
less-than-competent UFO investigators and exposed hoaxes. Includes a pretty definitive treatment of the famous Travis Walton case, most probably a hoax.
Again, the bulk of the book is individual cases, with the implication that there is a good chance that the
processes that go into their explanations are also operative in others that are not explained.

"Klass88"
UFO-Abductions: A Dangerous Game
Philip J. Klass 1988 (updated 1989), Prometheus Books; 200p. (222)

Argues that typical UFO abduction accounts arose from popular mythology, circulated in accounts like The Interrupted Journey and stories about the Travis Walton case. With the `abduction explosion'
of the 1980s -- through best-sellers by Budd Hopkins and by Whitley Streiber -- a pre-fabricated
`storyline' was already in place. To explain how disparate people provide similar accounts and believe in
them, Klass provides two mechanisms. Firstly, many abduction accounts were `uncovered' through hypnosis, so it is likely that they arose through the hypnotist's asking questions which `led' the patient to create a UFO abduction memory. The second is that several abductees (Streiber especially) exhibit symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE), which encourages confabulation of memory and fantasy. While the hypnosis hypothesis can be checked through session transcripts, the TLE idea reaches too far. Klass was a layman making a long-distance diagnosis on the basis of a little psychology research; saying Streiber had an organic brain disorder. This, and other ad hominem attacks (such as arguing that aliens wouldn't have taken an abductee because she was ugly) make this book an interesting failure.

"Billig82"

Flying Saucers: Magic in the Skies
  Otto Billig
  1982, Schenkman Books; ?p.

"Oberg82"
UFO's And Outer Space Mysteries: A Sympathetic Skeptic's Report
  James Oberg
  1982, Donning; 192p.

"Sagan74"
UFO's: A Scientific Debate
  Carl Sagan and Thornton Page, eds.
  1974, Norton (original 1972); 341p.

Based on an AAAS symposium in 1969, it surveys much of the ground about UFO's as the subject stood in 1972, with skeptics and proponents being represented. Still a useful reference about UFO sightings, though of course later developments like abductions do not appear. Hynek, McDonald, and Hall are the primary proponents, strongly opposed by Menzel, and other more mild skeptics. It is interesting to compare some of the "best" cases presented with their accounts in Klass's Klass"UFOs Explained.
Some of the general comments are also worth reading, particularly about "Social and Psychological Aspects," except for the psychoanalytic essay.

"Sheaffer86"
The UFO Verdict: Examining the Evidence
  Robert Sheaffer
  1986, Prometheus Books; 242p.

Discusses the history and personalities involved in the UFO phenomena, the problems of credulous treatment and lack of follow-up by the mass media, and the unreliability of eyewitness testimony. It contains detailed skeptical treatment of the Exeter UFO sightings, the Barney & Betty Hill abduction, and the New Zealand UFO Films. The author uses his knowledge of photography to discuss the analysis of UFO pictures and demonstrates how easily they can be faked. The book briefly compares the "scientific" investigation of UFO's to the "scientific" investigation of witchcraft in years gone by. It also compares the sightings of UFO's to the sightings of "faeries" and "mothmen." Even if you don't like the "debunking" tone of the book, it contains one of the best investigations of the Jimmy Carter UFO sighting found anywhere.

"Condon68"
Final Report Of The Scientific Study Of Unidentified Flying Objects
  Edward U. Condon and Daniel S. Gillmor, eds.
  1968, Bantam books; 965p.

"Schnabel93"
Round In Circles: Physicists, Poltergeists, Pranksters and the Secret History of the Cropwatchers
  Jim Schnabel

1993, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. (Penguin 1994), London; 295p.

A narrative account of the British crop circles phenomenon of the eighties and early 90s. The story starts with the mysterious appearance of strange figures in the wheatfields of South West England -- a center for mystic and new age beliefs -- and various efforts to explain them. The book follows two groups of researchers, one dedicated to meteorological explanations, the other with more exotic ideas. As the circles grow in number and complexity, the explanations become more baroque and the rivalries more heated until the balloon finally bursts with the hoaxers' confessions. A witty and amusing account, the author's sympathies are clear, but he lets his cast speak for itself. Could be criticised for being short on scholarly apparatus, and some of the insights into characters' motivations seem to be just a bit too pat. It arguably breaks off just when things starts to get interesting.

"Schnabel94"
Dark White: Aliens, Abductions and the UFO Obsession
Jim Schnabel
1994, Penguin Books; 304p.

Jim Schnabel follows up his recent Round in Circles with a book about alien abductions. Rather than attempting to establish the truth or falsity of specific claims, he describes the history of the events, and the stories of the main participants. The focus of this book is on the intertwined stories of Budd Hopkins, who pioneered the recovery of memories of abductions through hypnosis, Whitley Strieber, the celebrated "abductee," the skeptic Phil Klass, and John Mack, today's leading abductee proponent. Although Schnabel claims to be an agnostic on the subject of alien abductions and leaves readers to draw their own conclusions, his technique of quietly juxtaposing wild claims with prosaic realities is an effective way of debunking the extremes of the believers. The book is amusingly well-written and is certainly an excellent place for skeptics interested in the subject of abductions to start. It does have the same defects as Round in Circles, however, with its lack of index and of footnotes, particularly annoying given the way Schnabel writes about the thoughts and motivations of his subjects.

"Curran85"
In Advance Of The Landing: Folk Concepts of Outer Space
Douglas Curran
1985, Abbeville Press; 132p.

Curran, a photographer, drove around North America for a few years, taking pictures of rocket and flying saucer sculptures erected by ordinary folk, interviewing people into the more religious aspects of UFO belief, and becoming generally immersed in UFO culture. The text and photographs of this fascinating book give a sympathetic portrayal of the people involved, from the mini-religions of Unarius and Aetherius to those who dedicated much of their free time to try and detect flying saucers. A vivid description of how UFO mythology has permeated North American culture.

"Peebles94"
Watch The Skies! A Chronicle of the Flying Saucer Myth
  Curtis Peebles
  1994, Smithsonian Institution Press; 342p.

An objective history of "the flying saucer myth." Beginning with Kenneth Arnold's classic sighting of nine objects "skipping like saucers" near Mount Rainier in 1947, Peebles covers the classic events (Captain Thomas Mantell's "dogfight" with a UFO, the "Invasion of Washington," etc.) through their evolution into the modern belief in alien abductions. The dustjacket assures the reader "[t]his thoroughly researched chronicle concludes that the flying saucer myth is not really about disk-shaped spaceships and their angelic or demonic pilots. Rather, like earlier mythologies, it is an attempt to make order out of the world, an expression of our hopes and fears." An assurance which will not disappoint the reader.

"Lewis95"
The Gods Have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds
  James R. Lewis, ed.
  1995, State University of New York Press, ?p.

Examines the religious meanings attached to UFOs by the larger society as well as specific movements that claim inspiration from "Space Brothers" and other extra-terrestrial sources. It addresses the religious dimension of the phenomenon of alien abductions, particularly the impact of extra-terrestrial life on Christian theology. Of special interest are the surveys of primary and secondary materials that make The Gods Have Landed the indispensable reference on the subject. The included essays are The Contactees - A Survey; Religious Dimensions of UFO Phenomena; Religious Dimensions of the UFO Abductee Experience; Unarius - Emergent Aspects of an American Flying Saucer Group; Women in the Raelian Movement - New Religious Experiments in Gender and Authority; Waiting for the Ships - Disillusionment and the Revitalization of Faith in Bo and Peep's UFO Cult; Spiritualism and UFO Religion in New Zealand - The International Transmission of Modern Spiritual Movements; ExoTheology - Speculations on Extraterrestrial Life; UFO Contactee Phenomena from a Sociopsychological Perspective - A Review; and The Flying Saucer Contactee Movement 1950-1994 - A Bibliography.

"Cohen81"
The Great Airship Mystery: A UFO of the 1890s
  Daniel Cohen
  1981, Dodd, Mead & Co.; 212p.

Thousands in the US reported seeing a "mysterious airship" overhead, in 1896 and 1897, though no such ship was possible at that time. Both the sightings and the reactions to them parallel what took place with the first UFO reports. Media attention was present, and explanations proposed included hoaxes, a "mysterious inventor" and spaceships from other worlds. Cohen concludes that the best explanation for the wave is misindentification and hoax, with the

media improving on simple "night lights" reports. Similar hoaxes are known, and paranormal explanations are riddled with contradictions.

"Thompson91"
Angels And Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination
  Keith Thompson
  1991, Fawcett Columbine; 283p.

        An account of UFO history focusing on the conflict between believers and disbelievers, in "mythic" terms. Thompson reserves his admiration for those (like Jung and Vallee) who chose not to focus on the debunkers and believers but rather pondered why the strange phenomenon (whether physically 'real' or not) was happening now. He points out that both believers and skeptics at times have gone to ridiculous lengths to prove their cases, but neither side has attained conclusive victory. By the conclusion, however, an underlying "reality" of UFO's becomes the de facto viewpoint, along with unwarranted speculation about abductees being a transcendent form of human development.

"Jacobs75"
The UFO Controversy In America
  David Michael Jacobs
  1975, Indiana University Press; 384p.

"Eberhart86"
UFOs And The Extraterrestrial Contact Movement: A Bibliography
  George M. Eberhart
  1986, Scarecrow Press; 1298p.

"Rasmussen85"
The UFO Literature: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of Works in English
  Richard Michael Rasmussen
  1985, McFarland & Co.; 263p.

"Haines80"
Observing UFOs: An Investigative Handbook
 Richard F. Haines
  1980, Nelson-Hall; 300p.

"Haines79"
UFO Phenomena and the Behavioral Scientist
  Richard F. Haines, ed.
  1979, The Scarecrow Press, 1979; 450p.

"Story80"
The Encyclopedia Of UFOs
  Ronald D. Story, ed.; J. Richard Greenwell, consulting ed.
  1980, Dolphin Books; 440p.

        Out of date by now, and not uniformly reliable, but still a good first source for UFO information concerning events, personalities and sightings prior to the 80's. The information presented is often from the point of view of presenting serious mysteries, but it is

generally sober and intriguing.

"Hynek72"
The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry
  J. Allen Hynek
  1972, 1977, Ballantine Books; 309p.

Hynek, sometimes called "the father of modern UFOlogy" by proponents, started out as a scientific consultant to Project Blue Book, working to determine misidentifications of astronomical objects in UFO reports. He became convinced there was more to it upon investigation. Hynek is also well-known for his classification (1st to 3rd kinds) of UFO "close encounters." The book consists mainly of presentations of examples that fall within these categories. A classic of UFO literature, it does not include surprising information or hypotheses for anyone involved in UFO matters, but it is an excellent overview of the UFO incidents of its time.

"Hynek75"
The Edge Of Reality
  J. Allen Hynek and Jacques Vallee
  1975, Henry Regnery; ?p.

"Hendry79"
The UFO Handbook: A guide to Investigating, Evaluating and Reporting UFO Sightings
  Allan Hendry
  1979, Doubleday; 297p.

"Story81"
UFOs and the Limits of Science
  Ronald D. Story
  1981, William Morrow; 290p.

"Vallee69"
Passport To Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers
  Jacques Vallee
  1969, Henry Regnery; 372p.

"Vallee88"
Dimensions: A Casebook of Alien Contact
  Jacques Vallee
  1988, Contemporary Books; 304p.

"Vallee91"
Revelations: Alien Contact and Human Deception
 Jacques Vallee
  1991, Ballantine Books; 294p.

A theme of this book is the irrationality that surrounds UFOs where military authorities are concerned; but they may also use it for their own purposes, or promote it unintentionally. Vallee exposes some of the myths that have been accepted as fact in some UFOlogical circles, discussing for example alleged abductions and various

conspiracy threads, and shows what the origins of these myths are. An appendix presents his famous "Five arguments against the ET hypothesis;" another gives Vallee's swan song at the MUFON convention "Forbidden Science: The UFO Phenomenon and the Research Community." Though some of the "revelations" should be taken with a grain of salt, this is a good introduction to the mindsets prevailing in what is left of American UFOlogy today.

"Good87"
Above Top Secret: The Worldwide UFO Cover-up
Timothy Good
1987, Sidgwick and Jackson (London); 590p.

Some UFO proponents recommend this as "the most important book" on a UFO cover-up. Its focus is Britain and the US, but material is included about countries such as the ex-Soviets, China, and Australia. While documentation appears to have been provided, the many instances of shoddy research and overcredulity overshadow any case that might be made. Representative of the UFO cover-up theme in popular UFOlogy, but not recommended for useful information about UFO matters.

"Mack94"
Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens
John E. Mack
1994, Charles Scribner's Sons; 432p.

One expects a more sober book from a Harvard psychiatry professor, and prominent proponent of UFO abductions, but this is totally off the deep end. A collection of 13 case studies that read like bad science fiction interspersed with quasi-gnostic religious reveries, which are presented with little regard to evidential concerns. The justification is a variation on the familiar paranormal excuse: "it may be wrong to expect that a phenomenon whose very nature is subtle, and one of whose purposes may be to stretch and expand our ways of knowing beyond the purely materialistic approaches of Western science, will yield its secrets to an epistemology or methodology that operates at a lower level of consciousness:" (p.43). The chaotic presentation of the rather incoherent stories does not make this book worthwhile even as weirdness-entertainment.

"Pacheco94"
Unmasking The Enemy: Visions Around the World and Global Deception in the End Times
Nelson S. Pacheco and Tommy R. Blann
1994, Bendan Press; 437p.
Intro, table of contents, sample chapter and ordering information can be "http://www.cais.com/npacheco/ute.html" found on WWW. "Unmasking the Enemy is the definitive book about the UFO enigma and its associated phenomena." The table of contents includes: Saucers, Angles, and Hoaxes; Visions and Miracles through the Ages; Uncovering the Evil; and Messengers of hope. Seems like an interesting paranoia-book; it even covers Marian apparitions. A blend of Catholic conservatism, conspiracies, and pro-paranormalism.

"Hall64"
The UFO Evidence
  Richard H. Hall, ed.
  1964, NICAP; ?p.

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